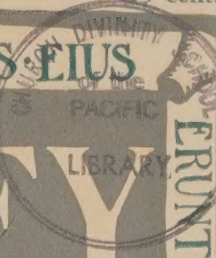


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A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF
THE AMERICAN CONGREGATION
OF THE SOCIETY OF
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

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Saint Michael's Monastery, Oyama

TWENTY FIVE YEARS IN JAPAN

THE Society of St. John the Evangelist had been hardly known to the Church people of Japan until a young Deacon, John Sakurai, went to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in September 1925 to test his vocation to the Religious Life. His Priest, the late Ven. John Cole McKim, was a classmate of Fr. Spence Burton, then the Superior of the American Congregation of the Society, when they were studying at the General Theological Seminary in New York. Fr. Burton graciously allowed the young Deacon to make a venture of faith, giving no promise whatever about his future work. His Bishop, the Rt. Rev. John McKim, had been anxious to have a House of the Society in his Diocese (North Tokyo), and wrote to the Japanese Father under the date of February 11, 1927: "My time on earth is necessarily limited as I am seventy four years old, and I would like to see something done (about the establishment of a house in the Diocese) before I say my *Nunc Dimittis*."

Half a year after Fr. Sakurai was professed at Boston, the second Japanese Priest, Stephen H. Kimura, joined the Society and was professed in the summer of 1931. In the following year, the third Japanese Priest, James T. Takeda, followed their steps, and Fr. Superior began to think seriously about how to launch a new Province in Japan.

In the Spring of 1933, Fr. Sakurai and Fr. Kimura were sent back to Japan for an extended visit. They took part in the Centenary Celebration of the Oxford Movement held in Tokyo in June by the entire Japanese Church. Bishop McKim and his Suffragan, Bishop Reifsnider, expressed their definite desire to have a Province of the Society in their Diocese. Fr. Burton paid his first visit to Japan in the Autumn of the same year to have conferences with the Bishops on the spot about the possibility of establishing a Province. It was early in the September of 1934 when Fr. Morse, newly appointed Provincial Superior, arrived at Tokyo accompanied by Fr. Takeda and a Lay Brother under temporary Vows. With the blessing of Bishop McKim, the Community Life was started in a rented house in Tokyo within the geographical boundaries of the Diocese of North Kanto. Fr. Viall joined them in the January of 1935.

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Bishop Reifsnider, who succeeded Bp. McKim late in 1935, was anxious to have Fathers active in missionary work in the Diocese. Upon his urgent request, the Japanese Fathers and Postulants moved to Kiryu in February, 1936, to take charge of five missions, while the American Fathers moved into the City of Tokyo to minister to the Sisters of the Epiphany and to teach at St. Paul's University.

A rented Japanese house was not well fitted to the Community Life, and all the Fathers strongly felt the need of a proper house. Unexpectedly, financial help came from the English Congregation of the Society in the form of a bequest large enough to buy a spacious piece of land and to build a Monastery on it. Thus St. Michael's Monastery, Oyama, came into existence in the Autumn of 1939. It is located just about fifty miles North-North-East of Tokyo on the bank of the Omoi Gawa (River of Meditation), three miles from the Oyama Station, an important railroad junction.

Fr. Hoffman joined the Brethren at Oyama in December, 1939, and Fr. Dale in the March of the following year. The Province was at last well staffed, but the international situation became worse. In August, 1940, the Japanese government prohibited all foreigners from holding executive offices, and missionaries began to leave Japan. The American fathers went back to America in November, 1940, leaving the Province in the hands of the newly elected Superior, Fr. Kimura.

During the war all communication with foreign countries was cut off, and younger members of the Society were drafted into the army or forced into labor camps. Towards the end of the war most of the cities were bombed and many of the people were evacuated into the country. The Fathers did their best in taking in and looking after refugees as far as the Rule and means allowed. Most of them were old ladies and sick people. Three of them died there. The Fathers carried on, however, without ever missing their Daily Office, Mass or Intercessions. In the harvest time they also helped neighboring farmers whose sons were drafted into the army. This created a friendly relationship which has continued until the present time.

When the war was over, and the American Occupation began, kind friends of the Society came to make enquiries after the Fathers

Twenty Five Years In Japan

and sent help to save them from starvation. It was a very pleasant surprise to have a visit from Fr. Smith, S.S.J.E., then a chaplain in the U.S.A. Army, in November, 1945. In that confused period great effort and ingenuity were required to make this visit. Fr. Viall was among the first civilians to be permitted to return to Japan in the summer of 1946. A year later he was appointed by the Presiding Bishop of the United States to be the Liaison Representative of the American Church in Japan. He held this office until he was elected and consecrated as Assistant Bishop of Tokyo in the Spring of 1949. Fr. Dale returned to Oyama early in October 1951 as Provincial Superior.

Fr. Dale was anxious to build a permanent Chapel at Oyama, and began to raise money. Just as the contributions from generous friends almost reached the goal, he died suddenly on August 29, 1956, at St. Marie's, Idaho, on his way back to Japan.

Fr. Dale's wishes were carried on, and a simple, yet beautiful Chapel in modern Japanese style was erected with a shrine to Our Lady in memory of Father Dale. It was dedicated on August 12, 1958. It was also a long cherished desire of the Fathers to have a House in Tokyo as a Retreat Centre. The dream was finally realized at the end of 1959 in a quiet residential section, about twenty-five minutes ride on a local line from Ikebukuro, where St. Paul's University is located.

The object of the Brethren in Japan, as elsewhere, is to seek their sanctification and to be instrumental in bringing others to partake of the same. Praying — the Opus Dei — God's work — is their chief and most important occupation. Yet they are often called for external works. Fr. Kimura, with his parishioners of St. Thomas' Church, Kiryu, founded a Sanatorium for tuberculosis patients in 1938 on the slope of Mt. Haruna, some seventy miles North-North-West of Tokyo. The institution has now two hundred beds and modern equipment. He started a Mission there too, and in the Spring of 1949 launched a Nursing Sisterhood in connection with the Sanatorium, named the Community of Divine Charity. The Sisterhood has now nine professed Sisters and seven Sisters under temporary Vows and Novices.

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Fr. Sakurai was the Chaplain for thirteen years to the first native Sisterhood, the Community of Nazareth, in Tokyo. He helped the English Community of the Epiphany found this new Community. He also has served on the Standing Liturgical Commission of the Japanese Church since 1948, and made many contributions in the revision of the Prayer Book which was approved officially by the General Synod of the Church in 1959.

The Society in Japan has a record to be proud of, and a future to look forward to with every confidence of God's continued blessing.

* * *



BROTHER BARNABAS AND JOHN OYAMA AT ST. MICHAEL'S

SOME OF MY GRATEFUL IMPRESSIONS OF THE WORK OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST IN JAPAN

By THE RT. REV. TIMOTHY NAKAMURA, *Bishop of Tohoku*

AS an associate of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, I always deem it that September in 1925 was a memorable month not only in the history of the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Japan, but also in the life of the Holy Catholic Church in Japan. In Autumn of 1925 a young Deacon in black cassock wearing an old-fashioned flat hat (very different from modern Cowley Fathers' favorite beret) left Yokohama to test his vocation in the Monastery of the society in Boston, and to start, D. V., a religious community in Japan.

He was warmly received by the then Superior, Father Burton, now the Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of Nassau and the Bahamas, and by the other Fathers as well. It was not widely known to the world, but was a precious event in the sight of Our Lord in Heaven.

The young deacon was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and at the house of the Society in Brooklyn, N. Y., for his stay in the States, he was ordained to the priesthood by the late Bishop John McKim in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York on December 14, 1925.

Some years later Fr. S. H. Kimura (in 1929) and Fr. J. T. Takeda (in 1931) followed their senior priests' example to test their vocation in the Cowley Father's House. They were all professed in due course and were praying eagerly for the day when they would be able to return and start a Religious Community in Japan.

Surely and richly they were so graciously blessed by God and by the eager wish of Bishop McKim, supported by the generous understanding help of Father Burton together with many other Fathers' sympathies, that their long-cherished vision came true in 1934.

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A quarter of a century may not be very long, but it did not seem short for them. It was a very hard period but glorious days at the same time. They did not have any material means to sustain them, but only trusted in God. Literally they followed our Lord's command, "Be not therefore anxious saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

Their primal and main job was and is to pray and to intercede. Their prayers were offered daily and regularly without ceasing, even in the terrible days of the war time. Hundreds of clergy and lay folk went to them for spiritual advice and for their meditations and retreat. Blessed be God!

The Fathers of the S.S.J.E. were not mere monks enclosed in a monastery. They were rather mission priests. They were ready to go forth to preach the Gospel, to conduct retreats and to teach the Catholic faith any place where they were invited.

The Cowley Fathers in Japan are singularly gifted with literary abilities. They have published hundreds of pamphlets to explain the deep things of God in easy words. Both clergy and lay people as well as inquiries are greatly benefited by their literary activities.

The Mother House in Cambridge has always been of great help to the Japanese brethren. Father Williams, the present Father Superior, visited with them several times. Fine priests such as Bishop Viall, Fathers Hoffman, Dale, Morse, Appleton and Clayton have been wonderful to us all.

Last year the Fathers in Japan were blessed with the new chapel. I hope and pray that God will more bless them and their work to the glory of God and for the salvation of the Japanese people.

THE NEW TOKYO BRANCH HOUSE

ST. JOHN'S HOUSE, the new Branch House of the Japanese Province, was solemnly dedicated on the first day of 1960. Nearly two hundred guests were present during the course of the day which began with a procession led by Bp. Viall, visiting and dedicating each part of the Monastic House.

The procession began with the words: "O Lord, protect this house," at the entrance, from whence the congregation proceeded to the Guest House:

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

This building is entirely Japanese style with three large tatami rooms. This is Japanese straw matting, on which people sleep, and from which all bedding is removed in the morning so that the space is available for other uses during the day. As many as fifteen can be slept in the Guest House at one time, and guests can also eat and spend most of their time there.

The procession then went on to the kitchen:

"He shall feed me in a green pasture."

Here is a very adequate stove, refrigerator, and in a separate small room, a washing machine. The next stop was the refectory:

"The eyes of all wait upon thee O Lord, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thy hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness."

This room, though not as large as the kitchen, is very gracious with its indirect lighting and long table at which a dozen can be seated. Then on to the library:

"Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old."

Although very few books were yet assembled, there is shelving for a good many hundred, and a well lit table for reading. Next to

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the library is a very roomy Common Room:

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another, not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

This is the room in which the Brethren since moving in, have spent most of their time. It has been kept comfortable with a Perfection Oil Burner, a gift from the congregation at Tachikawa. There is also a record player and radio. Then upstairs to the cells of which there are six:

"Save us, O Lord, watching, guard us sleeping, that we may watch with Christ, and rest in peace."

Each of the cells is equipped with a closet, sink, bed, chair, built-in drawers, book shelves and prayer-desk.

Then back to the Gen Kan (Entrance):

"The love of Christ hath gathered us into one, let us fear and love Christ our God: where charity and love are, there is God."

This is where shoes are exchanged for slippers, and where momentary guests can transact their business.

The climax of the ceremony was in the Chapel where the Bishop gave his solemn blessing, and celebrated the first Holy Eucharist.

The Chapel is extremely light and airy, and the simple free standing altar with its six great red candlesticks is most impressive. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in an aumbry at the Gospel corner of the building. The most impressive feature of the Chapel is the newly placed Christus Rex, the gift of a friend of the Society in Texas. The bright red and gold of this regal figure dominate the chapel and give a sense of majesty and joy that is remarkable for so small a space.

Besides the sacristy, just behind the chapel there are two other features of the House worthy of mention: the reception room, which is just big enough to accommodate a very fine piano which was given to Bishop Viall years ago; and the very large back yard with its pool and fountain. Altogether, there is nearly half an acre of land which has just been planted with grass seed.



HAIGA is a painting based on HAIKU spirit, usually with the calligraphy of a HAIKU. Here BUSON, the 18th century poet-artist, is responsible for both poem and painting.

I have shot a pheasant,
 The sun is still high —
 I am going home.

The time is spring as indicated by the seasonal word "pheasant", the humble hunter is feeling pleased with life, enjoying the spring sunshine. The poem suggests the satisfaction of a job well done, one of the unspoilable pleasures of a poor man's life.

SOMETHING ABOUT HAIKU, A Japanese 17-Syllable Poetic Form

By YASUKO HORIOKA

RIKYU, one of the great masters of the Art of Tea, once invited people for the tea ceremony. When the guests arrived at his house, they were shocked to find that all the peonies in the garden had been cut off at their roots, especially as these peonies had been well-known for their grandeur. And, as the guests entered the tea-room, they were even more shocked to see a single peony beautifully arranged in a vase on the alcove. This was to demonstrate that the essence of beauty was more predominant in one peony flower than in thousands of peonies in the garden, and that the boundless realm of beauty is more easily seen in a limited situation. Such is the spirit of the religion of aestheticism, which can be found in the Art of Tea, Noh-drama, Flower-Arrangement and also in the poetic forms of Waka and Haiku.

The old pond!

A frog jumps in —

Sound of the water. — *Basho*

The poet sat by the pond, meditating. The world was in complete silence, until a frog jumped into the water. A tiny plop in the soundless universe! The stage of this poem is small, yet what it aims at is profound, as it symbolizes the attitude of the poet towards life. It may be called detachment from the world, or the mysterious spirit of enlightenment. Haiku is the expression of the poet's search for eternity within the limitation of 17-syllables.

Trying to create the essence of beauty in a limited temporal framework has existed in Japanese art for centuries. Tea-ism seeks free expression of the human emotions within a strict set of regulations in a small tea-room. In Flower-Arrangement, a master of flowers produces natural beauty with only a few branches. In Noh-drama, even the slightest movement of the head expresses the

Something About Haiku, A Japanese 17-Syllable Poetic Form

depth of joy or sorrow. Shunzei Fujiwara (1114-1204), Waka poet, sang:

Fast gathering is evening dusk,
Cold blows the autumn wind,
And crying are the quails in the fields,
At the village of Fukakusa! — *Shunzei Fujiwara*

The loneliness of the autumn evening in a remote village is a theme loved by Japanese poets. In Japanese poetry, joy in nature is at the same time sorrow for the transitory in life.

Loneliness!

It, too, is joy!

An autumn eve. — *Buson*

Waka and Haiku poets endeavor to express such emotion of joy and sorrow within the limited number of syllables and with other various limitations. Unless he completely masters the restrictions and regulations of the poetic form, the poet cannot say freely what he wants to express. For instance, any 17-syllable collection of words cannot be called Haiku: it would be nothing but 17-syllable nonsense from the poetical point of view.

In order to trace back the history of Haiku, both internal and external origins should be considered. By "internal", I mean the history of the Haiku spirit, whereas by "external", the history of the 17-syllable poetic form. First, I shall deal with the internal origin of Haiku.

The history of Japanese literature has always been mingled with the history of religion. For example, Kojiki, the first known work of literature, is also at the same time, the "Bible" of Shinto, the nationalistic religion of Japan. Many Noh-stories deal with the salvation of the soul through faith in Buddha. The tea ceremony is a development of the Zen-ritual, and the philosophy of Tea-ism has both Zennism and Taoism at the base. Haiku, too, has religious thought for its background.

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Influences of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism are interwoven in Haiku poems, because the Haiku poets were brought up in these religious thoughts. Poets are poets because of their keen sensibility, and there is no doubt that Haiku poets have been consciously or unconsciously influenced by the religious thoughts of Japan.

For you fleas too,
The night must be long,
It must be lonely. — *Issa*

Who thinks of fleas other than as the distasteful creatures that torture us? For Issa, even fleas are the same with any other living creatures including human beings. He does not show any violence against their biting and sucking human blood. It is almost like the teaching of non-violence of Mahavirah, founder of Janism, who lived 500 B.C. in the period of Buddha, Plato or Jeremiah.

The silence!
The voice of cicadas
Penetrates the rocks. — *Basbo*

Does not this poem refer to the Tao that is wrapped in cosmic mystery; or the intuitional search of Zennism for the essence of life?

Even so, even so
Submissive before You —
The end of the year. — *Issa*

"You" in this poem could be the Tao, the Li of Confucianism, or God of Christ. Lao-Tzu Taoism says: "Let it go and let it be, nature goes by itself."

It is not my intention to classify all Haiku under different influences, but I only hope that the above examples prove the fact that Haiku spirit is originated in religious feeling.

As for the external origin of Haiku, it has to be traced back to the first literal work of Japan, namely Kojiki. The oldest Japanese poems which appear in Kojiki use the rhythm which consists of

Something About Haiku, A Japanese 17-Syllable Poetic Form

two kinds of phrases: a 5-syllable group and a 7-syllable group. These two kinds of phrases are arranged in various ways. Some of them have six groups while other short poems have five or three groups. The poetic form which consists of six phrases was used in the early days of the Japanese poetry, but it gradually decayed and a new form of five groups (5-7-5-7-7) has taken its place. This new form is called Waka, the Japanese poem in contrast to the Chinese poetic form, which Japanese poets also use. Waka is also called Tanka, a short poem in contrast to Choka, a long poem, which is the chief poetic form of Manyo-shu, a collection of poems compiled in the middle of the eighth century.

While Waka still exists as a leading poetic form of Japanese poetry, another form took shape in the seventeenth century. This new form is Haiku as we know it, made up of three phrases of 5-7-5 syllables. It first came in the form of "linked verses". The first poet composes the first verse of 5-7-5 and then the second poet develops it with 7-7 verse. The third, fourth, and many more poets continue adding 7-7 verse. These "linked verses" died out because of the extreme difficulty in technique and only the first part remains as Haiku.

The form of 5-7-5 syllable is not the only feature that distinguishes Haiku. The season word is also characteristic to Haiku. The Japanese people, especially poets, tend to associate their emotions with seasonal changes of nature. This tendency has become a regulation in link-verses and then in Haiku poems.

A sick wild goose
Falls in the cold night,
And I lying on my traveller's bed. — *Basho*

"Cold night", for instance, indicates the late autumn, when we first begin to feel the coldness of the nights. A season word in a Haiku poem can give a reader a seasonal background of the poem, but it does not necessarily coincide with the calendar season. It should be understood in an aesthetic or even in a symbolical way. It is said that there are about 15,000 season words at present, al-

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though about 500 are most frequently used. Haiku poets, especially beginners, have to consult with Saijiki (index of season words) again and again in composing Haiku poems.

Basho Matsuo (1644-1694), master of "linked verses" is also the founder of Haiku. His life was that of a pilgrim. He had had more than forty years of spiritual wandering before his first good Haiku was composed.

On the leafless branch
Perched a crow:
An autumn eve. — *Basho*

He travelled, but he was far from a tourist in a modern sense. He was a religious pilgrim who sought detachment and expressed it in the limited 17-syllable Haiku.

He realized that the aim of all great art is one. He named the different kinds of great art of his time and said: "... the spirit animating them is one."

Ill on a journey;
My dreams wander
Over a withered moor. — *Basho*

Basho died after he made this Haiku, but his spirit is alive not only in the history of Haiku but also in the hearts of those who seek harmony of soul in detachment. His religiousness cannot be expressed in any one particular religion.

Since Basho, many Haiku poets appeared and disappeared. Buson Yosa (1716-1783) shows extreme sensitivity and delicacy in his picturesque poems.

Spring shower
Just enough to wet
Tiny shells on the shore. — *Buson*

Three times it cried
And was heard no more
The voice of deer. — *Buson*

Something About Haiku, A Japanese 17-Syllable Poetic Form

Issa Kobayashi (1763-1827) is unique for his humanism which, perhaps, is due to his unhappy life.

Baby sparrow
Get out of the way!
Horsy's coming. — *Issa*

Come!
Play with me,
Orphan sparrow. — *Issa*

Shiki Masaoka (1869-1902) found Buson as a Haiku poet equal to Basho, and established a new Haiku school in Meiji Era.

Cold night!
A few fish
At the fish market. — *Shiki*

Kyoshi Takahama, Hekigodo Kawahigashi followed Shiki. Since Shiki, however, Haiku poems have changed in many ways, although they are still used in the 17-syllable form. The spirit of Haiku has changed. Many Haiku have become more subtle but less religious: more sophisticated but less mystical.

On the distant mountains
Shines the sun,
A withered moor! — *Kyoshi*

From under the bed
It was pulled out and was left,
A suitcase of the night! — *Hekigodo*

Dandelions, dandelions!
Spring opens her eyes
On the sands. — *Seisensui*

Many other contemporary Haiku poets form their own groups and publish their own Haiku magazines. Some express a new sense of seasons on new subjects such as sports, machines, or group activities: some stick to the traditional sense of seasons: while others try to

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establish a new lyricism. Thus Haiku still exists, as, like any other art and literature of either East or West, it struggles to be up-to-date. The changeable must perish in the course of human history, and Haiku, too, will perish if it has not any immortal element in itself. If, however, any work of art or literature is classic by virtue of its unchangeable spirit, by the same reason, great Haiku poems will never perish.

Good Haiku is universal in spirit, yet because of the hazzard of translation, they were not known abroad until a few decades ago. While the Japanese are busy trying to open a new direction in Haiku, only a few Westerners have been alerted to the original Haiku spirit. Translations of Haiku into French, German and English are still in the experimental stage, yet it is true to say that Haiku is becoming more universally known and appreciated, especially in the last ten years.

Prof. R. H. Blyth, who has been teaching English literature at a Japanese school for twenty or thirty years, established a standard English translation of classical Haiku, a four volumes work called *HAIKU*. The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science just published a good translation of Haiku called *HAIKAI AND HAIKU*. Other works in English about Haiku are all fragmentary compared with these two books.

As for the spirit of Haiku, there is not any definition, and its interpretation is according to the reader's understanding. If the western interest in oriental art and literature continues, I am sure that there will be some good Haiku translators who are also poets themselves, for I believe that the knowledge of language only is not sufficient for good translation of poetry. There must also be a poetical understanding.

A frog!

Quietly and serenely

He gazes at the mountain. — *Issa*

If man can stare at the mountain like this frog any time and under any circumstances, he is qualified to become a student of Haiku, as he understands the spiritual world of the poet.

UNTO THE FAITHFUL . . . A CROWN OF LIFE*

By RAYMOND T. McDONALD, S.S.J.E.

" And the Mother of Jesus was there."

ST. JOHN 2:1

AT certain times of the year, particularly in the spring, on Memorial Day, a special ceremony has grown up within the past forty years: the custom of placing wreaths and garlands of flowers upon the graves of the Unknown Soldiers: those unidentified ones whose remains have been buried in the military cemeteries. These men died in battle or in the line of duty and therefore special honor and respect is shown to them. Because they were faithful soldiers and gave themselves, in obedience to duty, to what they thought was a good and noble cause, these men who never returned alive are not to be forgotten. They were *there* when they were needed and they stayed *there* until they had completely fulfilled the promises they had made to be faithful.

In reality, they have done what we, you and I, promised that we would do when we became soldiers and servants of Christ. So we try not to forget their courage and endurance, and also we are encouraged by their example to keep going along our way with the same kind of courage and generosity that they showed, "even unto death". And we hope and pray that we ourselves will be able to remain ever faithful.

Now, in a somewhat similar way, because we do try to pay honor to those whom we deem worthy of such respect for the complete oblation of themselves to duty, we do not forget to think and to show special honor to Blessed Mary, the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We honor her because of her life of complete consecration, and for her perfect obedience unto death in doing whatever God asked of her.

*Sermon given at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Boston, on the occasion of the May Crowning of the statue of Our Lady.

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I think that the most characteristic way in which Blessed Mary devoted herself to the work of God was by and through her loyalty, all through her life. In our text, from St. John's Gospel, we are told, "And the Mother of Jesus was there". And so she always was. Our Lady was *there* when the Archangel Gabriel was sent from God to announce to her that she was chosen to be the Mother of God Incarnate. Mary was startled and surprised at the news that was given her, but she stood her ground and without hesitation answered the angel saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy word".

That was the real test of her consecration to God and to His most holy Will: "let it be done". God had set her apart and prepared her for this special duty He had for her to perform; Our Lady was consecrated for this great work of God. But not only does consecration mean that something is done *to* a person or a thing but in the case of a person, a living being with free will, that person must do something about it. Blessed Mary was consecrated to the service of God in a very special way. But instead of stopping at that point, and then just waiting idly about, she kept preparing herself for the next thing that God was demanding of her.

We, you and I, are supposed to be consecrated to God and to His holy Will. And indeed we are. For our consecration really begins at our Holy Baptism. At that time, we are set apart. We are signed with the Cross, the Holy Cross, not only to remind us of what is expected of us but also to keep us aware of what has taken place within our entire being. And like Our Lady, we are expected to prepare ourselves for the next thing God has in His mind for us to do. Otherwise, consecration would have no real meaning for us nor would we be held responsible for the failure to respond to God's Will. But we are held responsible for the promises we have made to be consecrated — to be set apart from a pagan and evil world. If my consecration does not teach me this, then I have misunderstood what the Will of the Lord is.

When the Angel appeared to Mary, he said, in effect, "Do you understand what is demanded of you?" And Mary answered, "Yes, let it be done". At our Baptism we were asked, "Do you renounce the devil and all evil things?" And we answered, "I renounce them

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all". "Do you believe?" we were asked, and we said, "I believe in all the articles of the Christian faith." "Will you be obedient all the days of your life?" came the question, and we replied "I will, by God's help." That is what we mean by being consecrated to God. And that was the way Mary proved that she knew she belonged to God in a real and special way.

And also, Blessed Mary was *dedicated* to God. She was holy, and set apart, and that is why we call her the "Blessed Virgin Mary". But besides this, she was *given* to God. She was not just handed over to God by someone else. The Angel came to her personally and she gave herself completely to God's holy Will. The whole thing was put to her and at every step of the way Mary kept answering, "Yes, let it be done according as you say". The privilege of serving God as a free, willing, offering was given to her and Mary responded fully, gladly, and without questioning the part that God would ask her to take in the word He called her to do together with Him. The task laid upon Blessed Mary was so important and holy that God demanded her full consent in responding to His holy Will. All this required her love, her faith, and her trust. And it also called for her absolute obedience and her courage. Mary kept on saying, in effect, "I will; be it done according as you say." The dedication of Our Lady was so complete that she never asked anything in return for what she promised she would do for God. All that Mary asked was to have God's Will always and completely fulfilled within her heart and in her life.

In her giving, in her dedication, Mary was always *there*. The shepherds came to the stable and they found Mary *there* with the Child. And when the Wise Men came, a little later, they, likewise, found the Child with Mary His Mother, *there*. This was all part of her dedication to God. All of her effort, all her time, all her love was focussed upon the Infant Lord Who had placed Himself completely under her care. Yet, at the same time, Mary did not claim that the Babe was just *her* very own. She understood that He would "save His people from their sins" — He was theirs, also. And Mary kept giving her own life to her Child, in order that they both might perfectly and absolutely give themselves without stint to the Father Who had asked them to do this work with and for Him.

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Again, we are likewise given to God at Holy Baptism. If the parents are present at the Service, they hand the infant to the sponsor, who in turn presents the babe to the priest, who represents the Church. We are given. We not only receive but we give. Persons who receive Holy Baptism and who do no more about it, imperil their souls by neglecting to pay back to God what He, through Jesus Christ Our Saviour, has entrusted to them. Mary's vocation was to keep paying back to God what she had received from Him. In other words, Mary kept offering herself and her Child back to God, to be used for the purpose of doing God's Will perfectly and without question.

To accomplish all this, Mary had to have the courage and the obedience to go all the way with Our Lord. No one else in the world knew by experience as well as Mary did that "This Child (was) destined to bring about the fall of many and the rise of many in Israel," to be a sign which men would refuse to recognize. Mary knew this, but she kept to her promise to go ahead regardless of the consequences. She had more than an inkling as to what it would involve. She knew what was happening when, during His sacred ministry, Our Lord began to be persecuted. She knew what to expect and yet there was no sign of bitterness on her part, nor any manifestation of regret, that God had appointed such a difficult and dangerous life for her. All that she was aware of was that God had asked her to do this for Him and nothing else seemed to matter. Whatever might happen along the way was not her concern but His.

In a sense, Mary's obedience was the same as the obedience of Our Lord Himself because it brought them both to the same places. The Holy Gospel tells us, "And meanwhile His Mother had taken her stand beside the Cross of Jesus". While, in regard to His friends, it tells us "They all forsook Him and fled". They all ran away. But not Mary His Mother. She had fled into Egypt to save her Saviour but she did not flee from the Cross to save herself. She took her stand *there*. And *there* she remained. And if we are ever in doubt as to where we can find her on this side of heaven, a sure place to look is beside the Cross of Jesus.

We ought always to keep it in our minds that Our Lord belongs to us as well as He did to Mary His Blessed Mother. And we should

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never allow ourselves to become strangers to Him, or to run away from Him, especially when He most needs us. We are always and at all times to identify ourselves with Him. We are always expected to bear witness to Him wherever we may be. We are also asked to share with others "the Truth as it is in Jesus".

This bearing witness to the Truth will eventually take us to the various places where Jesus and Mary met on the way to the place of Sacrifice. Sometimes, to be sure, our courage seems to fail us. Sometimes we are tempted to turn about and flee. Sometimes we are tempted to make excuses for not following Jesus all the way up to Calvary.

But Mary, the Mother of Jesus, took that journey and she walked every step of the way. And when she got there she remained until the work of our Redemption was complete. She did not leave until Jesus Our Lord had won the victory over sin and death. Mary has shown us how to meet our own Calvaries and also how, with courage and with hope, we can look for a place among those whom Jesus Our Lord has redeemed by His Most Precious Blood. And truly enough, if we have the grace to enter heaven, we shall find the Mother of Jesus *there* also.

THE VALUE OF A RETREAT

By R. M. GORDON

A Sacrament, as we all know, is a meeting place between God and men. So there is really something of a sacramental quality about a retreat, for during it He seeks us and we rest in Him. It is the "admirable commercium" between the soul and its Divine Lord.

But if it is true that God is especially close to us during a retreat, that He speaks to us through the various means and at various times, it is also true that the retreatment has his own part to play as regards the value of a retreat. We have to be ready, alert, lovingly waiting — opening wide our hearts that He may enter.

Occasionally, at the close of a retreat, someone may be heard to say, "Well, I didn't get anything out of that" — not realizing what a commentary such a statement is upon his own spirituality and what a revelation it gives as to the emptiness of his interior life.

As far as the addresses go, it may be that we really did not get anything out of them. This may be: and for a various number of reasons. Possibly, let us admit quite simply, there may have been very little to be extracted from them. On the other hand, they may have been too far beyond us, spiritually, so that we could not follow them. Just as if we had a very small, inadequate radio, only capable of receiving local broadcasts, we could not possibly tune in on some unusual overseas production, so if our spiritual wave-length is inadequate, the material given by some expert may seem only full of static and blur to us. The trouble obviously is not with the program but with the receiving set!

It may be, too, that in this particular retreat, God is reaching out to some other soul through these addresses. Someone else, of whom, naturally, we know nothing, may find in what does not appeal to us, the very thing he or she needed at that time. For us, God may use some other means of communication, at this retreat.

But, also — and this is very important — it may be that we just did not try to get anything out of the addresses. Someone once wrote

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a book about "Creative Listening" — and there is a great deal to be said for that. The listener has his share in the effectiveness or the lack of it, of the addresses. Any one who has had any experience at all in regard to public speaking, can recognize the difference between an interested, sympathetic audience and a dull, sleepy, bored, or even hostile one.

However, even supposing that the addresses do not seem to be helpful, it still does not mean that the retreat cannot bear fruit. The addresses are only one of the features of the retreat — important, to be sure, but not by any means the whole. And throughout the whole retreat, irrespective of the quality of the addresses, we have our part to play.

The summer sun may be shining ever so brightly and the sky be cloudless and the ocean glorious, when we are on vacation at the beach. But if we stay cooped up in our room all the time, we shall return to the city just as tired and as pallid and lifeless as when we went away. All the warmth and the invigorating air will not have done us a bit of good.

So, too, we might have a most powerful electric lamp to use but if we never take the trouble to connect it, we shall just be sitting in the dark. The light is available; it is up to us to make use of it.

We can never insist too strongly that, quite unlike human beings who are always trying to dominate and impose their wills on others, God never intrudes by force upon the soul to whom He has given free will and freedom of choice.

No ear may hear His Coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

An old Priest of a generation or so ago in England used to say quaintly "God is shy". Despite that inept and inappropriate expression regarding Almighty God, one can see just what he meant. For God is not a Dictator. He does not compel us by sheer force and power. God is Love. He draws souls to Him. Gently, though per-

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haps insistently, He whispers to us in the silence of our hearts, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"

Therefore, if our retreat is to have value for us we must be sure to do our part. In our world of today where sophistication and carelessness and often a rather belligerent egotism seem to reign, it is sometimes very difficult for some individuals to fall into the pattern of a retreat. The whole idea of following any kind of simple rule and set schedule is completely foreign to minds conditioned by schools and homes where "permissiveness" is the keynote. We are used to doing what we want, of reacting according to our feelings. So we are irked by having to do things at set times, by having to keep silent and quiet. Only recently I heard of a young woman who went some time ago to recuperate at a Convalescent Home conducted by Sisters. The second night, she was told by one of the Sisters-in-charge that she could not read in bed at night after nine o'clock. Lights must be out. Whereupon she packed her bag and departed the next morning!

But obedience to simple regulations and to the schedule which is given us at a retreat simplifies everything for us, and for everyone else, too. It establishes the blessedness of order upon confusion and chaos, and gradually, if we just allow it, it will smooth out some of the wrinkles in our inner confusion.

The bells, the regularity of daily Mass and of the Offices, the set times for meditation and prayer, for the meals and relaxation, all establish a different rhythm from our ordinary life in the world and infuse a tranquility and orderliness which will prove of infinite benefit to us, if we allow it.

So many of these things which may perhaps strike us as strange and very different in monastic procedure and custom, are actually only forms of courteousness. The sad thing is that so many have dropped courtesy and consideration out of their lives. The bells call us to do something for God: to Mass, to praise and adore Him, together with the whole Family of God, the Church — those on earth and those who have left this world in His grace and love; and all the Saints and angels on high — and to unite ourselves with Our Lord, in His one, great Sacrifice. There are the bells which

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call us to the Offices, to the time allotted for our meditation and prayer and for the addresses of the Conductor. They are God's Voice calling to us, saying "Come!" Whatever we are doing is for His Glory, even the refreshment of meals, the walks out of doors, the time for sleep at night. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God", as St. Paul tells us.

Promptness in obeying all the bells which summon us, is essential. If we are tardy, always trailing in at the last second, we hold up the procedure and disturb everyone else. If we are trying to love God more, we shall almost instinctively be thoughtful and considerate of those around us—not a disturbing element. But above all, since we are here as the guests of Our Lord, so to speak, how terrible to keep Him waiting!

So with the silence, which we have emphasized so much. If we recollect ourselves, if we remember in Whose House we are guests, we shall want to walk quietly, and to open and shut doors with a minimum of noise; to be lovingly reverent in the Chapel, before the Tabernacle where He is present, and not to interrupt others in their thoughts and conversations with Him.

Of course we should not make a fetish of the silence and become scrupulous about it. If some real necessity arises about which we have to ask a question, or if anything is wrong—if we feel ill, or have met with some little mishap—let us go at once, quite simply, as we have said, to the person-in-charge, who will straighten things out for us. This is better than to disturb a fellow-retreatant, unless, of course, some very sudden emergency should arise. Some times a person can make himself utterly miserable for the remainder of the retreat over some small difficulty which could have been smoothed out in five or ten minutes by the person-in-charge!

All this order and regularity is not fantastic but of the greatest value in bringing us into a new atmosphere and "setting the stage" for us. The more we comply with it, the more we respond to its calm and serenity, the more we shall reap its benefits.

For if we do, it will gradually bring us to a new sense of values, a new orientation of the focal point of our lives. Little by little we begin to realize that we are not all-important in ourselves but that

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we have our place in the great economy of God's service. We shall begin to understand what the saints have meant when they said they "lost themselves in Him".

It was a great thing in the history of science and human knowledge when Copernicus observed the swinging lamp in the Church. From that came the "Copernican revolution", when he showed that no longer, as had been previously believed, was the earth to be considered as the centre of the universe around which all the other planets revolved. The earth was only one of the planets — and a rather smaller one, comparatively — which took its place along with all the others, in moving around the sun as its centre. It is an equally important and valuable thing when we discover that everything does not revolve around us, personally, that we are not the centre of value but rather that we, insignificant as we really are, when we stop to think about it, have our own place in the great company of the children of God; of those in the Mystical Body of Christ, with God as the centre and the Dynamic Power controlling our lives — He who is

Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

And together with the reorientation, when we discover that we must take our humble place in relation to God, rather than that everything should concentrate about ourselves, we can gain a new perspective during a retreat.

When one wants to get a good view of the surrounding country, one goes up to a high place — a hill overlooking the sweep of farmlands and rivers stretching out to the far blue mountains. Or, to view a great city, one goes up to the roof of some high building. And to get an entire picture of some scene, photographs are taken from a plane flying over the area. So the retreat can lift us up above our problems and worries and half-made decisions and enable us to view them from a distance. From a height, how many things flatten out and disappear in insignificance! What a difference it makes to see them in perspective!

But we have to be willing to let go of our self-sufficiency, our self-will, our self-importance, in order to allow ourselves to be

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lifted by the power of the Holy Spirit closer to the Heart of God. In the spiritual life, the paradox is, as St. John of the Cross has pointed out, that in order to rise higher, we have to go down deeper and deeper in humility, in simplicity, in the sense of our own nothingness apart from God. If we begin to see this, even tentatively, even vaguely, we shall have done something by way of contributing our share in realizing the value of the retreat. And God, Who can never be outdone in generosity, will lift such a humble soul upwards, on wings of light.

"Our opening, and His entering", says Meister Eckhart, "are but one moment."

* * *

However feeble our spiritual life may be, we are to realize that we are taken out of nature into the very being of the incarnate God. This is the ocean into which we are steeped at our baptism. He has taken thee into Himself as the means whereby His substance may find a new expression.

FATHER BENSON.



The New CHAPEL OF THE SISTERS OF DIVINE CHARITY.

The Chapel is unfinished lacking belltower, sanctuary, and vestry.

COMMUNITY CHRONICLE

THE Rt. Rev. James P. De Wolfe, S.T.D., Episcopal Visitor, made his official visitation at the Monastery in Cambridge, Monday, May 31. He was celebrant at the Conventual Mass in the morning. After the tea hour he delivered an address to the Community. The following day he was present at the profession of a Sister of St. Anne's, Arlington Heights. Fr. Wessinger was the preacher.

The Superior was honored at a special dinner at the Monastery June 6 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the Priesthood.

The annual Fathers' party was held at the Church of St. Augustine and St. Martin the evening of May 5. The Brothers and Novices delighted the guests with a dramatic sketch on the life and times of Bro. Juniper. It was based on a one-act-play by Laurence Housman.

The Summer Retreat for the Community was held in two sections at West Newbury June 20 through July 10. Fr. Smith was the conductor.

A delegation of the Fathers and Brothers attended a special service emphasizing the Religious Life at the Franciscan Monastery, Little Portion, Mt. Sinai, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 16.

Brother Martin John left June 6 for Huntsville, Ontario, where he will do special rural parish work during the summer under the supervision of the Rector.

Fr. Williams held a retreat for the Sisters of the Transfiguration at their convent, Glendale, Ohio, April 1-7. He conducted the Three Hours on Good Friday at St. Alban's, Cape Elizabeth, Me. On April 20 he assisted at the Blessing of a new wing for the Convent of All Saints, Catonsville. The Bishop of Maryland gave the Blessing.

Fr. Williams conducted a retreat for the Sisters of St. Margaret at their convent in Louisburg Square, May 9 through May 14. He also officiated and preached on the occasion of a St. Anne's Sister's

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taking her first vows at Arlington Heights. On June 15 he visited All Saints Convent, Catonsville, for the Profession of a Sister.

Fr. Smith made his regular visitation to the Sisters of St. Mary April 4-7. He conducted a conference for students of the School of Theology, Boston University, April 24. At Calvary Church, Americus, Ga. he held a Mission May 1-8. He visited St. Mary's Convent, Sewanee, Tenn. May 10-12. From June 13 through 18 he gave a retreat for the Sisters of the Holy Nativity, Bayside, Long Island.

Fr. Wessinger conducted a retreat for the Sisters of St. Anne in Chicago April 24 - May 1. He preached and officiated at the closing of St. Anne's School June 8.

Fr. Palmer preached a noon-day series of sermons at Holy Trinity, Toronto, April 4-8. He preached the Three Hours at Kitchener, Ont. in the course of his Holy Week addresses there. On Easter Day he preached at Fort William, Ont. During the course of a lay retreat at Calvary Church, Alberta, April 18-21, Fr. Palmer dealt with certain aspects of the new Canadian Prayer Book. From there he proceeded to Banff for a series of conferences. He conducted a mission at Red Rock, Nippegon, Ontario, May 5-15.

Fr. Rowell conducted a retreat at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Conn., April 2 and 3. During the same month he gave a series of Wednesday evening devotions at St. John's, Jamaica Plain. He preached the noon day sermons at St. Paul's Cathedral, Boston, April 22 and 29. He attended a service on behalf of the Religious Life at St. Mary the Virgin's, New York City, May 7. Bishop Burton, S.S.J.E., preached the sermon. At the Monastery in Cambridge he conducted a retreat for men from Trinity Church, Weathersfield, Conn., May 20-22. On Religious Life Sunday, May 29, he preached at Turner's Falls, Mass.

Fr. Pederson conducted a mission at Trinity Church, Warren, Pa., April 3-10. He held another mission at St. Mary's, Park Ridge,

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Ill., May 1-8. At De Koven Foundation he conducted a retreat for clergy wives, May 10. He gave the Associates' retreat for the Sisters of the Transfiguration, Glendale, Ohio, June 14-19.

Fr. Upson delivered a luncheon address at St. John's Church, Irving Park, Ill., April 6. He conducted a lay retreat at De Koven Foundation, Racine, April 22-24. On April 27 he spoke on the Religious Life at St. Paul's, Peoria, Ill. At Gibsonia, Pa., he conducted a retreat April 29-May 1. A school of Prayer was held under his direction at Grace Church, Freeport, Ill., May 15-17. He gave a series of devotional and instructional addresses at Christ Church, Elizabeth, N. J., May 23-25. He preached at St. Edward the Martyr on Religious Life, Sunday, May 29.

* * *

The heart that is trained to gaze upon God receives a teaching it cannot tell how. It is a teaching which fills at once the intellect and the affections; which transforms the nature; which communicates strength; which sanctifies the purposes; which teaches the will. It is a teaching which gathers up in one simple gaze of unutterable love the fulness of love. 'In thy presence is the fulness of joy.'

FATHER BENSON.

BOOK REVIEWS

NO ESCAPE FROM LOVE by Fr. Hugh, S.S.F. Pp. 63. Faith Press.
Price 6/—.

THOUGH written a bit aslant, this book is very worthwhile, such a fresh change from those "standard works" on the Sacrament of Penance. Perhaps Fr. Hugh's attempt to relate this sacrament to the doctrine of the Church so to escape the dangers of the over-individualistic piety of some penitents (e.g., the debased meaning of "state of grace") is unsuccessful as an essay in theological precision. But what he says is subtly illuminating. As are the remarks, of fine Bonaventuran insight, on the humanity of our Lord and this Sacrament, and the especially provocative survey of the history of Penance and all the overtones of that history for a doctrine of development — but not a doctrine, a living fact. To be read closely.

E. H.

GOD IN US by Miles Lowell Yates. Edited by W. N. Pittenger and W. H. Ralston, Jr. Greenwich, Seabury Press, 1959.

THIS book sounds the authentic voice of the General Seminary, a voice not heard so clearly as it once was, perhaps because *that* era is past. The names of Von Hugel and Tyrrell occur often; but so does that of Simone Weil (and how at home she is here). This is a spirituality of enormous reticence, of *Deus absconditus*, and the immediacy of the world. So many books of ascetical theology quickly leap from the problems of beginners to the problems of more advanced souls. This book lingers at the beginning, facing everything frankly, struggling to make the uncreated light flicker in even the most thickly created situation. It is for this reason that Fr. Yates avoids or questions so much traditional terminology, and this book will save many of us from assuming that devcut language is always understood by laity. We must be clear about the background against which such language is useful and the background from which it arose; and Fr. Yates' first chapter on the determinants of ascetical theology is superb.

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One only wishes Fr. Yates had gone on to apply these determinants to specific schools. Perhaps it is asking too much, but one misses certain clear references to traditional ascetical writers; and they, after all, furnish the bulk of reading to devout laity. The lack of historical criticism lessens the efficiency of the book, which will not replace classical authors or standard works such as Harton's *Elements of the Spiritual Life*, though it is an excellent companion to them.

Fr. Yates always seems to struggle with his material, frequently emerging victorious with those superbly simple sentences. There are, however, a few unresolved conflicts this reviewer would like to mention. One is the problem of union with God either by the ladder of creation or by the refusal of images, one of the basic problems in spiritual writings. We get the impression that Fr. Yates prefers the ladder, yet the negative way is quite prominent. It is really up to the reader to derive his own conclusions; but the student may be either very confused by Fr. Yates' position, or, it may be, very greatly illuminated. It is a question whether the opposition between these two kinds of spirituality is between irreconcilable theologies, or is a matter of individual psychology and *attrait*, or is more a linguistic opposition.

In the matter of petitionary prayer there is something unsatisfactory also. Surely Fr. Yates is right in his general position that a theology of petition must not be based on the miraculous (e.g., prayer is power), but on the acceptance of createdness. Yet Christianity is more than the Zen master effecting acceptance by breaking his disciple's leg. Christ comes not to destroy but to fulfill the law of created life, yet He *does* fulfill it. And the miraculous is the result of the restoration of the creation "in Christ". Why shouldn't our laws of logic be baffled as the creation is set in a new context? Enlightenment comes as much from the shock of the "miracle" of re-creation as from the acceptance of creation.

The reader will find odd views on the relation of faith and grace and a certain inconsistency in the criticisms of the French School of the imitation of the earthly life of JESUS (though on page 126 justice is done to that most helpful practice of offering the merits

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of JESUS to the Father, so characteristic of the French School). The justifying end of the French School is found in the life of Charles de Foucauld, and a study of him might have made Fr. Yates' criticism a bit different.

The reviewer's criticism is, of course, disproportionate. The book should be read. It is lovely and very *helpful*. The meditations at the ends of the chapters are often pure gold.

E. H.

THE OFFERING OF MAN by Harry Blamires, Morehouse-Barlow Co., New York, 1960.

THIS is the fifth of Blamires' books to be chosen by the Episcopal Book Club. Many interesting ideas and statements appear here and there throughout the book but the author's style is so loose and rambling that it takes a great deal of patient and dull reading to come upon them. American readers may be bewildered by the long diatribe against artificial insemination since it is not a burning issue in this country. The few pages on logical positivism can only confuse those who are not professional philosophers while professional philosophers will only find them thoroughly unconvincing. Once in a while the author waxes extremely "earthy" in a way that is both pointless and boring.

The book is printed on an unattractive stiff kind of paper and contains an unusual number of embarrassing misprints for a book of its size.

One comes away from the book feeling that Harry Blamires is a promising young author, but one who needs a great deal of practice in writing. In short, one feels that a person of C. S. Lewis' stature could have condensed the 146 pages to a few concise paragraphs which would lend Blamires' ideas the potency which they lack in their present form. Blamires is Principal Lecturer in English at King Alfred's College, Winchester.

L. G. J.

Book Reviews

FAITH WITNESSES: *Records of Early Christian Martyrs*, edited by Edward R. Hardy.

IN this work Professor Hardy has assembled and translated some of the more interesting of the acts of the martyrs. The earliest presented is that of S. Polycarp, c. 156, the latest those of S. Felix and of S. Procopius, at the very beginning of the fourth century. Thus the range of material covers the various and changing aspects of both persecution and of the *acta* themselves. A clear interesting introduction precedes the seven *acta* chosen for presentation and each selection is equipped with a short and useful statement. These, together with occasional footnotes and other supplementary data, stimulate the general reader's interest and insure his grasp of this material.

This book is an appealing and useful one; the stories of the martyrs, in one case written down by them in prison and later expanded, are in themselves significant as on-the-spot documents. Accordingly they reflect vividly the social and religious environment of the earlier church, and also form some of the earliest Christian literature. But further, these trial transcriptions and narrations of suffering have a special relevance for the church today. It is good to see that they will get the wider audience they merit in this book.

— CHARLES WITKE

MY PRAYER OF "NOW"

By L. R.

IT has become difficult for me to pray in a conscious, formal set pattern.

God knows my deepest desires and despairs better than I and He knows far better what is best for me.

I sincerely pray that I may lovingly accept His will for me and for those I love. I pray, too, for all His children, whom I may or may not know and I pray for my enemies. This is my prayer. Additional words I cannot find.

I think to pray when I retire and when I awaken.

I know that every living moment God allows me can only be lived in the utmost fulfillment if I constantly look to God for direction and guidance. He gives me sufficient peace to live each day according to His will and wishes.

Personal, specific experiences are important only insofar as my reactions are concerned.

Looking to God each moment does not preclude my acting badly nor does it completely quell or bring into control my unruly, undisciplined, unpredictable will.

But it does afford me the opportunity to spot check, to examine and to attempt to rectify and make immediate amends when necessary. Much confusion, disharmony and anguish can, in this way, be avoided.

I will never be perfect but even knowing this, I can strive for perfection of this moment.

When taking my inventory, I must take into account the limitations that still hold me in bondage, not as a means of excusing my behavior but of improving it. And, I must look for and recognize the good which is God's gift to me. To ignore this would be to ignore God's grace for which I pray.

My Prayer of "Now"

I can never use my humanity as an excuse for my imperfections. With God's grace and guidance I can recognize my human and spiritual frailties for what they are . . . transgressions against God, my Father. I pray I may recognize them but never excuse nor rationalize them.

With recognition comes knowledge; with knowledge and God's grace, wisdom. With wisdom, through God's grace, comes freedom, if only for a moment.

I will never be perfect but I can always seek perfection. God forgives my many failures as long as I am honestly trying, to the best of my ability, for His Sake.

His faith and hope in me are much greater than mine in Him. But, infinitely inspired by my Father's Love and my desire to do as He wills, this moment may be the moment I am most pleasing to Him.

What a glorious guest, the prayer of Now, looking always to God for His inspiration and direction, being unafraid to live this moment for Him.

— *Thoughts of a member of Alcoholic Anonymous who is seeking the way of God.*

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